Wolf Girl

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by margot16

Summary

Under improbable circumstances, two legendary figures meet for the first time.

In ancient times, where the land lay covered in forests.

"Disgusting little creatures...soon all of you will feel my hate...and suffer as I have suffered..."

The words of the boar god echoed through my mind, the numbness and pain in my arm growing stronger by the day. It was cursed by his hatred, the last wretched product of his dying breaths. I had already needlessly slaughtered countless men against my will because of this curse. If I did not find the source of this hatred, and soon, the entire forest would suffer the same fate as me.

My long black hair tied into a tight bun under my hood, I surveyed the churning waters of the river before me. The thatched hay cape around my shoulders rustled gently in the wind as Yakul bristled beneath me, the uneasiness in the air plain to both of us. Suddenly, I spotted the source: two men lay half-exposed at the water's edge, unmoving and unresponsive. I leapt from the powerful gazelle's shoulders to provide what assistance I could.

"Still breathing..." I muttered to myself as I placed a slender hand in front of the nearest one's mouth, feeling warm air still circulating there. Placing my bow around my neck, I gently placed both hands under his arms and brought him safely to shore, leaping back across the rapid rocks to retrieve the other laying face-down halfway into the river.

As I lay the second one down by his comrade, Yakul stirred, whipping his head upward and his ears along with it. I heard it too: a slight rustling from the opposite shore. An adversary? An ally? There was but one way to discover the source.

Pulling the lower half of my hood across my mouth, I retrieved my bow and hopped along back into the rapids, using the cover of several large boulders fallen there hundreds of years prior to mask my approach.

From behind the cover of a large overgrown log, I saw it. It was a sight that made me gasp in surprise and made my breath catch in my throat. An immense black wolf, easily as long as six men placed end to end. It lay on its side, solitary red eye flicking open and closed in pain. The other eye was long gouged out, replaced with a solitary scar in the shape of an 'x'. Slowly

it made its way to its feet, and as I watched in awe and deference two smaller wolves appeared from the forest's edge, one carrying a smaller girl.

She was easily the most beautiful girl I had ever seen, and though I could not place my finger on it she was utterly familiar to me. I knew I had not yet seen this girl in my lifetime, and yet...it was like I knew her. An immense longing took hold of me then as I watched the bizarre proceedings unfold.

The girl leapt from her perch to tend to the largest wolf, a painful wound on its neck gushing blood in large measure. She placed her face deep in the wound, sucking the blood from the fissure with wild abandon and spitting it onto the soft green ground. My heart leapt into my throat then as the wolf's red eye made contact with my own, letting out a low growl at the notice of my presence behind the log.

As if sharing senses with the wolf god, the girl turned towards me as well, seeking out my eyes shrouded in shadow with her own. She was a stunning sight to behold.

Black messy hair graced her head, a solitary red streak playing off her bangs like fire in the night sky. A blue headband managed to tie down some of her locks as large, round white earrings hung from her lobes like ornate plates. Her face was painted intricately with red paint, now mixed with a large amount of the wolf's blood smeared across her visage. She wore a cape of fur around her shoulders, white and soft as it blew in the breeze. She scowled at me as my eyes grew wider.

She stood, scowling at me as the wolf behind her seemed to grow more lucid in its examination of me. She spit one final mouthful of blood onto the ground disdainfully, as if I was an old enemy she had seen many times before. The idea that she shared my feeling of recognition was exhilarating and terrifying in its own right.

I stood then, purposefully leaping onto the top of my log and ripping the lower hood from my face.

"My name is Satsuki! I've traveled far from lands to the east! Are you ancient gods, and have I come at last to the realm of the spirit of the forest?" I implored to them deferentially, hoping that my tone was altogether lacking in familiarity. The last thing I desired was to anger one of the great gods of the forest, or for that matter whoever this beautiful girl before me was.

The two smaller wolves positioned themselves defensively around the largest, the girl unmoving and continuing to eye me with a mixture of suspicion and recognition. Several moments passed in silence this way, the only sound that of the river's water lapping at the stones far beneath me.

Slowly the largest wolf turned from me and loped slowly into the forest, the girl petting its haunches as it did so. Fixing me with one last look before mounting her smaller wolf charge, she stared down at me from afar and spoke in a voice that was hauntingly raspy and demanding.

"Go away."

That was all she said as I watched, gasping as her and her black wolves disappeared into the forest as quickly as they had appeared.

Surely I had never met this girl before in my short life, and yet such a powerful feeling of longing and recognition had gripped my heart as I gazed upon her for the first time that I thought I had known her, possibly even had been friends with her in a previous or future life.

As the screams of one of the men I rescued brought me back to the near shore, I made a pact with myself. To find this girl, and learn the ways of the forest gods from her before the darkness in my arm consumed me wholly.

It would be my final act as the last Princess of the Emishi.

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